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ABSTRACT

An application of the diffusion of innovations theory to library marketing, this study was designed to determine what channels of knowledge are more effective in persuading undergraduate students to adopt the use of library public services. To explore this topic at the local level, the following question was formulated: By what communication channels do undergraduate students at Indiana State University know about certain of Cunningham Memorial Library's public services, and to what extent do they use these services once they know about them? The variables in the study are discussed in connection with a review of the library literature and communication theory, and the development of a questionnaire sent to a random sample of residence hall students is described. Analysis of the data collected indicates that interpersonal channels were positively correlated with adoption while mass media channels were not; knowledge of public services was negatively correlated to both interpersonal and mass media channels; and an unfavorable evaluation of specific services did not seem to be a factor in the adoption process. A list of references and a copy of the questionnaire with the tabulated responses are attached. (BK)

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Indiana State University Undergraduate Students'
Channels of Knowledge of and Use of Cunningham
Memorial Library's Public Services

by

Jack W. Lyle

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Department of Speech
Indiana State University
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A current concern among librarians is marketing the library. One aspect of library marketing is the selection of channels of communication which are the most effective in promoting both initial and continued use of library services. Yet, while ways to market the academic library have been enumerated in library literature, the most effective channels of communication is a topic rarely explored.

To explore this topic at the local level the following question was formulated:

By what communication channels do undergraduate students at Indiana State University know about certain of Cunningham Memorial Library's public services and to what extent do they use these services once they know about them?

Before discussion of the relevant literature on each of the variables in the question is presented, it may be well to emphasize what the variables are. In the first part of the question knowledge of public service is the dependent variable and the various channels of knowledge are the independent variables. In the second part of the question the dependent variable is the use of services and the independent variables are knowledge and channels of knowledge.

Knowledge of library public services is not generally dealt with in library literature. It has been confined to the study of awareness of reference services. By using a questionnaire Jerold Nelson (5) took a 30% random sample of faculty awareness of academic library services at six colleges in California. He concluded that the average faculty member questioned was aware of only 50% of the reference services available to him. He indicated that the first step which the librarians

needed to take was to establish channels to communicate the availability of services to the faculty.

The major study on university students' awareness of reference services was conducted by Mollie Sandock (7). In considering the services of the Regenstein Library at the University of Chicago, she used a stratified random sample of graduate and undergraduate students choosing a random sample of 1.5% of each stratum. She devised a questionnaire for telephone interviews with University of Chicago students. She found many students unfamiliar with or uncertain about reference services. Three services included by her were not available. This inclusion was intended to prevent students from getting all answers "correct" by saying that they were aware of every service about which they were questioned. The undergraduate students had only 44% "correct" answers--were aware of a service if it existed, unaware of it if it did not exist. Sandock called for a publicity campaign to inform potential users of services available. She suggested that other universities investigate student awareness and use of their library's information services.

On the second variable--channels of knowledge--very little research is indicated in library literature. The literature on academic libraries often represents opinion about channels which may lead to use. Many articles tell how channels are being used. For example, Ellen Winikoff (9) mentions using local media coverage and a quarterly newsletter as channels of knowledge.

Frequently mentioned as mass media channels for academic libraries are the print ones, such as articles in newspapers: "If the campus

newspaper prints an average of one item per week and the local newspaper one a month, the library is probably getting its fair share of publicity." (Angoff, 1:146) Another example of a print channel often mentioned is the library handbook: "Every library should have constantly in print a general leaflet or folder outlining the scope of its services." (Harrison, 3:36) The broadcasting channels are much less frequently mentioned for academic libraries.

The interpersonal channel of knowledge about academic libraries particularly emphasized is the faculty member: "No librarian who works without the cooperation and good will of the faculty can be effective." (Lyle, 4:109)

Regarding the third variable--use of services--the bulk of the literature on academic libraries is concentrated more on library use and less on library services. For example, questionnaires have been devised to ask those in the building why they came to the library. Some studies have been primarily concerned with the comfort and convenience of the library facility. Other studies have counted the number of books borrowed as the indicator of library use. Still other studies have concentrated on whether or not the book desired could be found in the library--involving the cataloging of the book, the shelving of the book, and the number of copies purchased.

A study of use of library services relevant to the question posed above was that done by Robert W. Burns, Jr. and Ronald W. Hasty (2) at the Colorado State University. They attempted to discover patterns of use, as well as faculty and student attitudes toward and level of awareness of certain library services with special emphasis on the science reference

desk. Questionnaires were sent to faculty members to administer to their classes and to fill out themselves. The questionnaires were distributed to sample 15% or fifty students (whichever was greater) in each class rank in each department of six colleges within the University. The authors concluded that this work was important as an initial attempt to construct an instrument for learning about the behavior, needs, characteristics and attitudes of the academic library clientel. While they made no broad generalizations, one comment they made on questions asked was that the frequency of use of any library service was generally marked occasional by the students.

Thus the variables in the question posed above have been dealt with piecemeal at other university libraries. In relation to knowledge of public services there has been some research done on awareness of reference services. Channels of knowledge have been more often enumerated than researched. Use of services other than circulation, reserve, and cataloging has rarely been studied. Therefore, the question posed cannot be answered by replication of a research study done at another academic library.

Relevant to the question is the theory in marketing of diffusion of innovations. The definitive work on this communication theory is Communication of Innovations by Everett M. Rogers with F. Floyd Shoemaker (6). Rogers and Shoemaker (6:18) state that "crucial elements in the diffusion of new ideas are (1) the innovation (2) which is communicated through certain channels (3) over time (4) among members of a social system." Rogers and Shoemaker (6:19) define an innovation as "an idea, practice, or object perceived as new by the individual."

Here the emphasis is placed on the perceiver. In the question posed above the public services are not new practices in themselves, but are new to the student until he knows of them.

As Rogers and Shoemaker (6:24) define it "a communication channel is the means by which the message gets from the source to the receiver." They add that, if the purpose of a communication is simply to inform, mass media channels are best, but, if the objective is to persuade someone "to form a favorable attitude toward an innovation, an interpersonal channel is more effective."

The importance of time is reiterated by Rogers in one of a collection of 1975 conference papers edited by Schramm and Lerner (8:210). "Because time is one of the four essential elements in the diffusion process, and thus receives more explicit attention than in other types of communication research, it should be stressed in the research designs utilized in diffusion research."

"A social system" according to Rogers and Shoemaker (6:28) "is defined as a collectivity of units which are functionally differentiated and engaged in joint problem solving with respect to a common goal." Among the examples which they give of a social system is students at a university. Therefore, the Indiana State University students mentioned in the question posed are an appropriate population to examine in relation to this theory.

An important element of this diffusion of innovations is the innovation-decision process. According to Rogers and Shoemaker (6:25) it is "the mental process through which an individual passes from first knowledge of an innovation to a decision to adopt or reject and to

confirmation of this decision." To better relate this process to the question posed above, it is necessary to examine the four functions or stages in the innovation-decision process as they are indicated by Rogers and Shoemaker (6:103).

"1 Knowledge. The individual is exposed to the innovation's existence and gains some understanding of how it functions." Knowledge includes not only the student's being aware of the existence of a library public service new to him or her, but also gaining some understanding of its operation.

"2 Persuasion. The individual forms a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the innovation." Based on knowledge gained initially the student forms an opinion of the public service.

"3 Decision. The individual engages in activities which lead to a choice to adopt or reject the innovation." The student tries the public service and decides whether or not to continue using it.

"4 Confirmation. The individual seeks reinforcement for the innovation-decision he has made, but he may reverse his previous decision if exposed to conflicting messages about the innovation." The student may receive further information after he has decided to adopt or use the public service which persuades him or her that s/he should discontinue its use. The decision to discontinue might be made because the student replaces the service with one s/he believes to be better or because s/he becomes disenchanted with the service because it does not perform to his or her satisfaction. Conversely, s/he may have decided to discontinue use of the public service only to receive new information which leads him or her to decide to use it.

As noted above, Rogers and Shoemaker's exposition of the diffusion of innovations theory divides channels into interpersonal and mass media. For purposes of this study interpersonal channels may be defined as a Library staff member, a fellow student, or a professor. Mass media channels may be defined as a television tape, a University Bulletin announcement, a Statesman article, or a Library handbook or brochure. A Library staff member may be defined as a person employed through the Library to work in the Library.

For purposes of this study Library public services may be defined as:

1. Reference service. Explaining how to use the card catalog; explaining how to use indexes and abstracts; and helping to find a fact.
2. Special Services. Playing audio tapes requested by the listener; photocopying (for a small fee) print or microform materials; handing out microforms and explaining how to view them on a reader.
3. Teaching Materials service. Furnishing filmstrips and slides and explaining how to use the projectors.
4. Government Documents service. Explaining how to find government publications.

Some terms in the definitions above need clarification. A microform is a negative or positive photographic reproduction of printed material greatly reduced in size from the original. A government publication is a printed or similarly duplicated material originating in, or printed with the imprint of, or at the expense or by the authority of, any office of a legally organized body which administers the affairs of a group of countries, a country, a state, a county, a city, or similar

political subdivision. Printed material would encompass books, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, and maps. Material would include both printed materials and recordings, tapes, filmstrips, and microforms.

As indicated above, according to Rogers and Shoemaker (6:255), it is already generally known that "mass media channels are relatively more important at the knowledge function, and interpersonal channels are relatively more important at the persuasion function in the innovation-decision process." When this generalization is considered in relation to the question posed above, two hypotheses follow:

For an Indiana State University undergraduate student interpersonal channels of knowledge about Cunningham Memorial Library's public services will be more highly positively correlated to adoption of them than will the student's mass media channels of knowledge of them.

For an Indiana State University undergraduate student mass media channels of knowledge about Cunningham Memorial Library's public services will be more highly positively correlated to knowledge of them than will the student's interpersonal channels of knowledge of them.

The diffusion of innovations theory also indicates that use follows knowledge. "Knowledge of innovations can create motivation for their adoption," say Rogers and Shoemaker (6:105). Thus, a third hypothesis in relation to the question posed above is generated:

For an Indiana State University undergraduate student knowledge of public services of Cunningham Memorial Library will be positively correlated to adoption of these services.

To designate time spent in the Indiana State University social system this study samples among Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors.

Not only are the students asked to designate class standing, but they are also asked to indicate if they are transfer students. This indication reveals those whose class standing belies the amount of time spent in the social system. A fourth hypothesis involves time spent in the social system:

For an Indiana State University undergraduate student there will be a positive correlation between the number of years spent at Indiana State University and the adoption of public services of Cunningham Memorial library.

This study is both of theoretical and practical use. The theoretic utility is to see how diffusion of innovations theory is related to library marketing. Library literature does not indicate that this theory has been applied to library concerns before. The practical utility is to learn what channels of knowledge are more effective in persuading undergraduate students to adopt the use of Library public services. Here library literature indicates more listing of channels than it does testing their effectiveness.

Method

The questionnaire was developed to gain reliable information and yet to be answered as quickly as possible in order to get a high number of questionnaires returned from the students. It was set up so that students could mark their answers on answer sheets provided by the Indiana State University Student Research and Testing Office. Because the students were used to taking examinations by marking these sheets it was felt that they would have no difficulty in using the answer sheets to respond to the questionnaire without supervision.

The questionnaire was pretested on 10 students who were in the Cunningham Memorial Library. They reported no difficulty in understanding the questionnaire. An examination of their answer sheets did not reveal any unexpected answers that would indicate misunderstanding of the questionnaire. The pre-test questionnaire was used for the survey. It is shown in the Appendix.

The Student Research and Testing Office took a random sample of residence hall students at Indiana State University to get the names of 225 Freshmen, 225 Sophomores, 225 Juniors, and 225 Seniors. Questionnaires and answer sheets were sent in campus mail to all 900 with instructions to return them in the campus mail envelope. A suggestion was made to return them within a week. After the week had passed a reminder notice was sent to those who had not responded. Two weeks after the reminder notice was sent the returned surveys stopped coming. 210 students responded. Two students marked nothing on the answer sheet except a social security number or their class standing and a third indicated graduate student status, so these three were not

included in the results. Also excluded were the responses of 24 students who indicated they had transferred from other institutions because it was not possible to relate time spent in the social system of Indiana State University to their class standing. This left 183 students of which 62 were Freshmen, 50 were Sophomores, 38 were Juniors, and 33 were Seniors.

Operationalization of the variables

To test knowledge of services the five public service counters at the Cunningham Memorial Library were listed on the questionnaire. The students were asked to indicate which one counter they felt was the best one to go to if they needed these Library services:

1. Help in using the main card catalog
2. Having audio tapes played for you
3. Help in getting microforms
4. Help in getting slides or filmstrips
5. Help in using the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature
6. Having material photocopied for you
7. Help in locating a specific fact (e.g., date or address)
8. Help in finding U.S. government publications

Only one answer was counted right for each question. The right answers were given a score of 1 and the rest were scored 0.

To test interpersonal channels the students were given columns headed Library staff member, professor, and student. They were asked to rate each from 0 to 6 to indicate the extent to which each of these was important to the student in giving information about eight services listed. 0 was to mean a channel was not at all important and 6 was to

mean a channel was very important. The eight services listed were those numbered 1 through 8 in the preceding paragraph. The score for each of these questions was 0 to 6.

To test mass media channels the students were given columns headed Library handbook or brochure, Statesman article, television tape, and University Bulletin announcement. They were asked to rate each from 0 to 6 to indicate the extent to which each of these was important to the student in giving information about eight services listed. 0 was to mean a channel was not at all important and 6 was to mean a channel was very important. The eight services listed were the same as those numbered 1 through 8 above. The score for each of these questions was 0 to 6.

To test trial of services the students were asked to answer yes or no to whether they had ever tried each of the eight services numbered 1 through 8 above. Yes was scored 1 and no was scored 0.

To check evaluation of services the students were asked to indicate evaluation of each of the eight services as very good, good, fair, or poor. Very good was scored 3, good was scored 2, fair was scored 1, and poor was scored 0.

To test adoption of services the students were asked to indicate for each of the eight services how often they had continued to use the service from the choices most of the time, sometimes, or never. Most of the time was scored 2, sometimes was scored 1, and never was scored 0.

For year in school Freshmen were scored 1, Sophomores were scored 2, Juniors were scored 3, and Seniors were scored 4.

Results

The mean, standard deviation, and theoretic score range for each of the variables is shown in Table I. Correlation among the variables is shown in Table II.

Hypothesis I

For an Indiana State University undergraduate student interpersonal channels of knowledge about Cunningham Memorial Library's public services will be more highly positively correlated to adoption of them than will the student's mass media channels of knowledge of them.

This hypothesis as can be seen from Table II was supported ($P < .05$).

Hypothesis II

For an Indiana State University undergraduate student mass media channels of knowledge about Cunningham Memorial Library's public services will be more highly positively correlated to knowledge of them than will the student's interpersonal channels of knowledge of them.

This hypothesis as can be seen from Table II was not supported ($P < .05$).

Hypothesis III

For an Indiana State University undergraduate student knowledge of public services of Cunningham Memorial Library will be positively correlated to adoption of these services.

As can be seen in Table II this hypothesis was supported ($P < .05$).

Hypothesis IV

For an Indiana State University undergraduate student there will be a positive correlation between the number of years spent at Indiana

State University and the adoption of public services of Cunningham
Memorial Library.

As can be seen in Table II this hypothesis was supported ($P < .05$).

Table I
Mean, Standard Deviation, and Score Range of Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Theoretic Score Range
Knowledge of Services	5.21	1.65	0 - 8
Interpersonal Channels	74.70	32.01	0 - 144
Mass Media Channels	28.99	33.75	0 - 192
Trial of Services	3.81	1.97	0 - 8
Evaluation of Services	9.56	4.82	0 - 24
Adoption of Services	4.89	3.00	0 - 16
Year in School	2.23	1.11	1 - 4

Table II
Correlation of Variables

	Year in School	Inter- personal Channels	Mass Media Channels	Knowledge of Services	Trial of Services	Evaluation of Services
Inter- personal Channels	-.0844					
Mass Media Channels	-.1611	.4512*				
Knowledge of Services	.1361*	-.0044	-.2959*			
Trial of Services	.2671*	.2605*	-.1299*	.1327*		
Evaluation of Services	.1975*	.3058*	-.0336	.1740*	.7636*	
Adoption of Services	.1307*	.2720*	-.0282	.1809*	.7436*	.6995*

*Statistically significant ($F < .05$)

Conclusions

Interpersonal channels were positively correlated with adoption while mass media channels were not. To have adoption of its services the Cunningham Memorial Library would be better advised to use interpersonal channels of communication about its services rather than mass media channels.

Interpersonal channels were negatively correlated to knowledge and mass media channels were even more negatively correlated to knowledge. It is difficult to explain this failure to support the hypothesis. The underlying assumptions seem sound. One explanation may be that Library communication channels are not used by the Library often enough to give students knowledge of Library public services. Another explanation of the failure to support this hypothesis may lie in the design of the questionnaire in the area of knowledge. Students may have guessed the correct answers for knowledge rather than possessing this knowledge. Knowledge as defined in this study is supposed to include some understanding of the operation of the services. Many of those questioned had not used certain services at all and, therefore, could have had no understanding of their operation.

Knowledge of public services is positively correlated to their adoption. Thus it seems that the Library, if it wants public services adopted, would do well to give the students knowledge of these services. Given the results of this study it is very difficult to say what channels should be used to impart this knowledge because both interpersonal and mass media channels were negatively correlated to knowledge. If a choice must be made, interpersonal channels would seem the better

choice; they are less negatively correlated to knowledge than are the mass media channels.

The strong positive correlations were between trying the services and favorable evaluation of them, between favorable evaluation of the services and adopting them, and between trying the services and adopting the services. Thus an unfavorable evaluation of the services does not seem to be a factor in the adoption process.

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19

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APPENDIX

Indiana State University

Dear Student:

I am currently working on a research project concerning the channels of communication that students have about certain Cunningham Memorial Library services. You have been randomly selected to participate in this project.

Therefore, I am asking you to answer the questions on the enclosed questionnaire. It only takes about fifteen minutes. The information is needed to plan for better communication about library services. Your cooperation will greatly contribute to the success of this project. I need the answers that only you can provide.

Your answers to these questions are confidential and will be used for planning purposes only. Please answer all the questions.

Your cooperation is most appreciated. Thank you.

I hope that you can answer this questionnaire by Monday March 24, 1960. Please return the questionnaire and completed answer sheet in the campus mail, addressing this envelope to:

Jack Lyle
Library

Please do not write on this questionnaire. An answer sheet is included on which to mark your answers. When marking your answers please use a number 2 black lead pencil.

On the left is a list of some services available at Indiana State University's Cunningham Memorial Library. In the boxes across the top are listed service counters at Cunningham Memorial Library. For each service mark on your answer sheet the letter for the one counter you feel is the best to go to if you need the library service indicated.

Library Services	Counters				
	Circulation Counter	Documents & Periodicals Counter	Reference Counter	Special Services Counter	Teaching materials Counter
<u>Questions</u>					
1. Help in using the main card catalog	A	B	C	D	E
2. Having audio tapes played for you	A	B	C	D	E
3. Help in getting microforms	A	B	C	D	E
4. Help in getting slides or filmstrips	A	B	C	D	E
5. Help in using the <u>Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature</u>	A	B	C	D	E
6. Having material photocopied for you	A	B	C	D	E
7. Help in locating a specific fact (e.g., date or address)	A	B	C	D	E
8. Help in finding U.S. government publications	A	B	C	D	E

On the left is the list of some services available at Cunningham Memorial Library. The boxes across the top show types of communication channels through which you may have learned about these services. Please mark your answer sheet to indicate the extent to which each of these communication channels was important to you in giving information about each of the services. Use a scale of 0 to 6 where 0 means a particular channel was not important to you at all and 6 means a channel was very important. Use any number between 0 and 6 which you feel best expresses your estimate of the importance of a particular channel in giving you information about the library service indicated. Shade this value for each question below which corresponds to the one on the answer sheet.

Library Services	Types of Communication Channels						
	Library handbook or brochure	Library staff member	Professor	Statesman article	Student	Television tape	University Bulletin announcement
Help in using the main card catalog	Question 9 123456 0	Question 10 123456 0	Question 11 123456 0	Question 12 123456 0	Question 13 123456 0	Question 14 123456 0	Question 15 123456 0
Having audio tapes played for you	Question 16 123456 0	Question 17 123456 0	Question 18 123456 0	Question 19 123456 0	Question 20 123456 0	Question 21 123456 0	Question 22 123456 0
Help in getting microforms	Question 23 123456 0	Question 24 123456 0	Question 25 123456 0	Question 26 123456 0	Question 27 123456 0	Question 28 123456 0	Question 29 123456 0
Help in getting slides or filmstrips	Question 30 123456 0	Question 31 123456 0	Question 32 123456 0	Question 33 123456 0	Question 34 123456 0	Question 35 123456 0	Question 36 123456 0

On the left is the list of some services available at Cunningham Memorial Library. The boxes across the top show types of communication channels through which you may have learned about these services. Please mark your answer sheet to indicate the extent to which each of these communication channels was important to you in giving information about each of the services. Use a scale of 0 to 6 where 0 means a particular channel was not important to you at all and 6 means a channel was very important. Use any number between 0 and 6 which you feel best expresses your estimate of the importance of a particular channel in giving you information about the library service indicated. Shade this value for each question below which corresponds to the one on the answer sheet.

Library Services	Types of Communication Channels						
	Library handbook or brochure	Library staff member	Professor	Statesman article	Student	Television tape	University Bulletin announcement
Help in using the <u>Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature</u>	Question 37 123456 0	Question 38 123456 0	Question 39 123456 0	Question 40 123456 0	Question 41 123456 0	Question 42 123456 0	Question 43 123456 0
Having material photocopied for you	Question 44 123456 0	Question 45 123456 0	Question 46 123456 0	Question 47 123456 0	Question 48 123456 0	Question 49 123456 0	Question 50 123456 0
Help in locating a specific fact (e.g., date or address)	Question 51 123456 0	Question 52 123456 0	Question 53 123456 0	Question 54 123456 0	Question 55 123456 0	Question 56 123456 0	Question 57 123456 0
Help in finding U.S. government publications	Question 58 123456 0	Question 59 123456 0	Question 60 123456 0	Question 61 123456 0	Question 62 123456 0	Question 63 123456 0	Question 64 123456 0

On the left is the list of some services available at Cunningham Memorial Library. Reading across the page, mark on your answer sheet the letter indicating for each service your answer to the three questions asked about that service. If you answer no to the first question in any column, please skip the next two questions on your answer sheet.

Library Services

	Have you ever used this service?		If you answered yes: How would you evaluate the service you received?				If you answered yes: How often have you continued to use this service?		
	Yes	No	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never
Help in using the main card catalog	Question 65 A	B	Question 66 A	B	C	D	Question 67 A	B	C
Having audio tapes played for you	Question 68 A	B	Question 69 A	B	C	D	Question 70 A	B	C
Help in getting microforms	Question 71 A	B	Question 72 A	B	C	D	Question 73 A	B	C
Help in getting slides or filmstrips	Question 74 A	B	Question 75 A	B	C	D	Question 76 A	B	C
Help in using the <u>Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature</u>	Question 77 A	B	Question 78 A	B	C	D	Question 79 A	B	C
Having material photocopied for you	Question 80 A	B	Question 81 A	B	C	D	Question 82 A	B	C
Help in locating a specific fact (e.g., date or address)	Question 83 A	B	Question 84 A	B	C	D	Question 85 A	B	C
Help in finding U.S. government publications	Question 86 A	B	Question 87 A	B	C	D	Question 88 A	B	C

To complete this questionnaire, please give some information about yourself. This information may be needed for analysis: Please mark the appropriate letter on your answer sheet.

89. What is your present classification at Indiana State University?

A. Freshman B. Sophomore C. Junior D. Senior E. Graduate

90. Have you transferred here from another college or university?

A. Yes B. No

91. Sex

A. Male B. Female

92. Citizenship

A. United States of America B. Other

93. Race

A. Asian B. Black C. Hispanic D. American Indian E. White F. Other

94. Which is the closest to your grade point average?

A. 4 B. 3.5 C. 3 D. 2.5 E. 2 F. 1.5 G. 1

95. Are you employed anywhere?

A. Yes B. No

In the lower left-hand corner of your answer sheet is a column headed: student identification number. In this column please shade in your regular Indiana State University student identification number.